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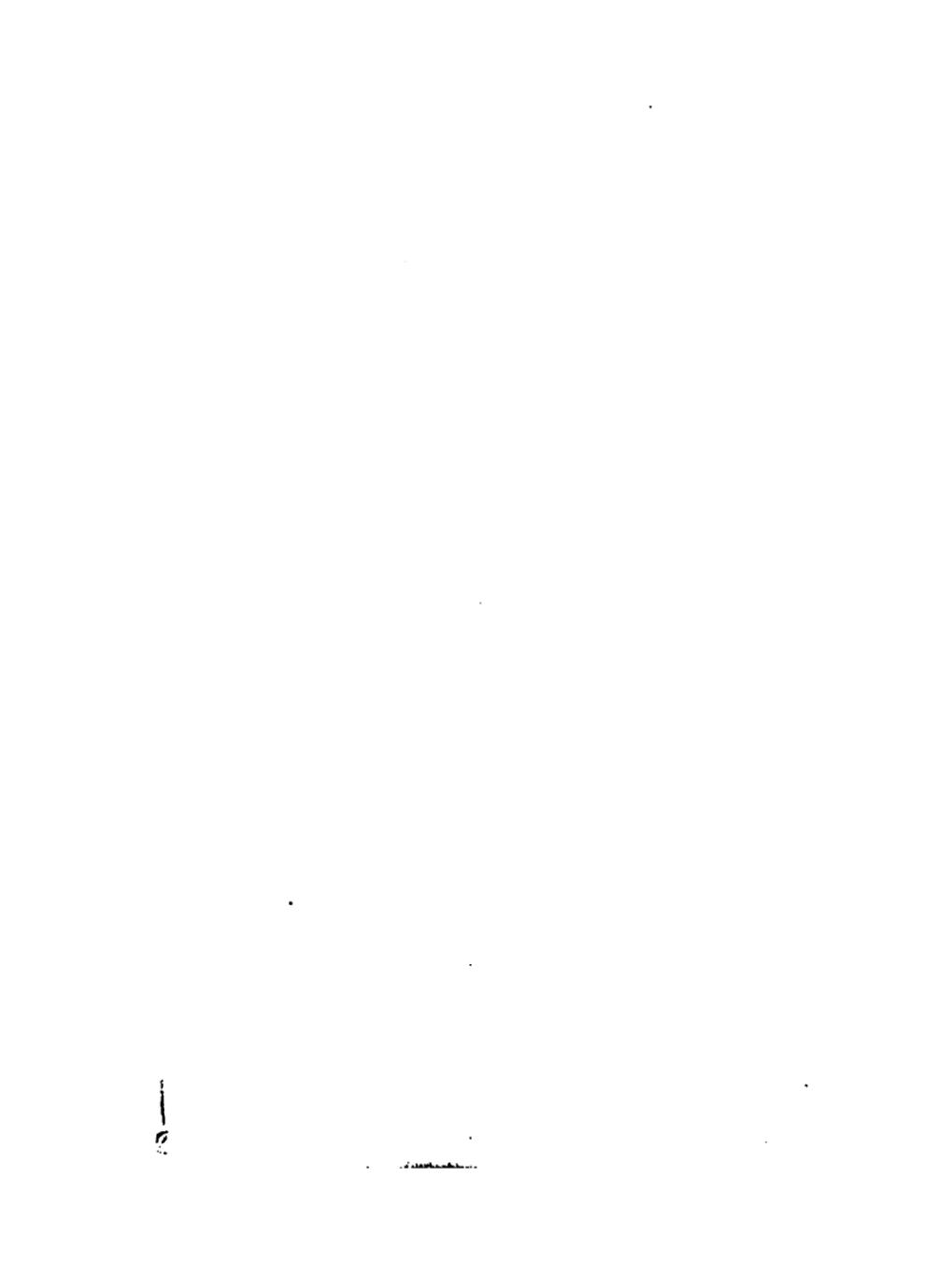
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ALMOST
FOURTEEN

MORTIMER A. WARREN

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ALMOST FOURTEEN

ALMOST FOURTEEN

A BOOK DESIGNED TO BE USED BY PARENTS
IN THE TRAINING OF THEIR SONS AND
DAUGHTERS FOR PRESENT MODESTY AND
NOBILITY, AND FOR FUTURE FATHERHOOD
AND MOTHERHOOD

BY

MORTIMER A. WARREN



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1900



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*LITERATURE OF THE
LELAND STANFORD UNIVERSITY.
a 60007*

P R E F A C E
TO REVISED EDITION.

FRIENDS whose sincerity and ability as critics I cannot for an instant doubt, have assured me that this book as first published contained too much of physiological and illustrative detail. Thanking them heartily for their kindly criticism, I have reviewed the work, excising and adding as seemed desirable, and herewith offer a revised edition to the calm and candid judgment of these friends and of all fathers and mothers.

M. A. W.

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ALMOST FOURTEEN.

I.

TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS
TO WHOM THIS LETTER MAY COME.

Greeting :

LAST Sunday morning, after breakfast, I took up a book to read. The book I had chosen is indeed a good book ; it is one of the best I know ; it always sets me thinking. I read it often, and always read it slowly ; there is no other way to read it. The name of the book is "Amiel's Journal." The author treated me on this occasion as he had done before : he made me drop my book and think. This is the passage which set me thinking : —

✓ “Modesty is always the sign and safeguard of a mystery. It is explained by its contrary,—profanation. Shyness, or modesty, is in truth the half-conscious sense of a secret of nature, or of the soul, too intimately individual to be given or surrendered. It is exchanged. To surrender what is most profound and mysterious in one's being and personality at any price less than that of absolute reciprocity is profanation.”

You see, I am a teacher, and love a modest child. I would that every boy and girl were modest; and I think all would be modest if they could know how modesty makes us love them. But none can be modest by pretending to be modest; one can only be modest by being modest. I wonder if I can help any one to be modest by explaining to him Professor Amiel's thought? I wonder if I had better write a book on this subject? Questions like these haunted me during the next few days following my Sunday morning reading, and continued to haunt me until I

said I would write the book: and here it is.

I call my book "Almost Fourteen," because I am talking to you who are almost fourteen years of age. To be sure, a good deal of what I have to say you could have understood when you were seven years of age, and something of what I have to say I doubt if you will fully understand until you are a good deal nearer twenty-one years of age. Still, the most of what I have to say can be understood by most boys and girls who are fourteen, or nearly fourteen; and so I speak throughout the book as though I were addressing boys and girls of that age.

I speak to both boys and girls because I have nothing to say which ought not to be understood by both. At the same time, a great deal of what I have to say is what boys and girls, as boys and girls, never talk about. Why they never talk about it will appear further on; it is enough to say now that the sexes never do talk about these things, and that the only way they can learn about them is

from a book, or from conversation with others of their own sex.

In speaking to both boys and girls, and in writing of the sexes, it is often convenient to use pronouns ; and unfortunately we have in the English language, as you know, no pronoun which in the singular number stands for either gender. In such cases I shall use the masculine pronoun ; but you will at once understand that I refer to male and female alike. In the last two sentences of this letter are good illustrations of what I mean. If your father give you the book, then he will write the word "Father" on the dotted line, and the masculine pronouns are correctly used ; if your mother give you the book she will sign her name on the dotted line, and the masculine pronouns will be changed in your mind to the corresponding pronouns of the feminine gender.

I just now gave you credit for knowing one little fact of English grammar : boys and girls of fourteen often study grammar, and often dislike the study. To tell the

truth, I do not like it myself ; at least, I do not like it so well as some other studies. Nor do I think a knowledge of English grammar so important as a knowledge of some other sciences. Surely it is of more importance for me to know about myself, — how I breathe, think, digest ; how I was born ; how life follows life on the earth, — surely, I say, some knowledge of physiology is of more value to me than some knowledge of grammar. My book is to be entirely about yourself, and while I cannot call it a physiology, yet I am confident you will like it because it is to be about yourself.

As a boy nears fourteen, his wise father tries to get and keep a pretty close sympathy and acquaintance with him. Some day he takes his son to ride or walk, and finds an easy way to tell him some things about himself. He tells him perhaps how he was born ; how God made him, using his parents as agents ; how there is a mystery about birth which the wisest do not understand ; how modesty is a sign and safeguard of that mystery. The girl's

good mother also finds time for many quiet talks with her daughter as she treads the thoughtless years between seven and fourteen, in which quiet talks she tells her daughter what the father tells his son. I design my book to continue the instruction which your parents begin.

But why do I write a book to tell you about modesty and the mystery it covers? If your parents have already begun to tell you, why not let them tell it all? Because some of us have no parents, or are absent from them; because everything cannot be told in one or two or three conversations; because some parents are too busy or too modest to tell it all; because some parents would prefer to tell only a part, and give you a book to finish the telling; because some of you would prefer to have your parents tell only a part and give you a book to finish the telling; because some of you would prefer that your parents should tell you nothing, but give you a book to tell the whole; because there is a great deal concerning girls which boys should know, and a great deal concerning

boys which girls should know, and which neither will be likely to know unless you find it in a book ; and because boys of fourteen sometimes talk ignorantly and foolishly among themselves, and girls of fourteen talk likewise among themselves concerning the great mystery of birth, — and a book like this will give you some knowledge of these things, and so be a means, let us hope, of saving you from some of your foolish conversation.

Blessed is the son between whom and his father there is so complete an understanding that he may talk when necessary freely and modestly about the mystery of his being ! Blessed is the daughter between whom and her mother the confidence is deeper and closer than with any other friend ! And blessed is the son or daughter, who, hearing from immodest playmates (as all of you will hear) some of these mysterious things referred to in a ribald way, yet lets them slip from his memory because he has already talked with his parents about them ! Blessed, too — yea, thrice blessed — is the father who

has such a son and the mother who has such a daughter ! I do not mean that this book of mine shall come between a father and a son, or between a mother and a daughter, to drive them farther apart ; I mean that it shall draw them nearer together. I do not mean that this book of mine shall make you ashamed of your being because it reveals some mysteries of your being ; I mean that it shall make you more regardful of your being, and so more trustful of, more obedient to, more loving towards, the parents who gave you your being.

When a boy is given a new book, he looks first to see if there are any pictures in it. If he finds none he is disappointed ; still, he does not yet condemn the book, because it may be a story with a great deal of conversation in it. He next looks for conversation ; and if he finds none, and finds that it is not a story at all, he is a very much disappointed boy. Now, this book of mine contains no pictures, is not a story at all, and the places where there is talk are very few. Yet I con-

fidently believe you are going to like this book, because it is all about yourself. This book is to have one fault, which I think is a pretty good fault for a book to have : it is going to repeat the important idea a good many times, so that — no matter how carelessly you read — you will have something to think about. I have one favour to ask : it is that you read but one letter at a sitting. I mean to give you enough in one letter to think about for a day or two, — perhaps for a week. Just as “Amiel’s Journal” makes me pause and think, so I hope “Almost Fourteen” will make you pause and think.

I shall write as if I were personally writing a letter to you with my pen, and each letter will take up a certain subject just as the chapter of a book does. This is my first letter, and its object is to explain how I came to write the book. You will not expect me, however, to put a date or salutation or signature to any of my letters. They will have a title, and that is all. And my letters, like the letters you receive

from any other friend, I beg you to regard as confidential : let them be for you alone. If I were to visit your house, I should not expect to find my book lying on the parlour-table, any more than I should expect to find my written letters there. The written letters received by you through the post you keep in your own room in desk or drawer, and there, too, you will keep, I hope, this book. Your mother will often see this book lying there as she inspects your chamber. Indeed, I hope that the mother will make a present of the book to her daughter, — the father to his son ; in that case you can think of me only as a person engaged by him to write you some letters which he was too busy to write. In that case, too, it will be better if I do not sign my name at all, but let him write his title below ; you will then be able to think all the more that these letters came

From your loving

.....



II.

THE PHYSICAL CHANGES IN OUR LIVES.

WHY do we give a boy the right to vote at the age of twenty-one? In some States, and in some towns of other States, girls, too, are allowed to vote when they have reached that age. Why is this age selected? I suppose it is because the boy or girl is supposed to have reached the state of manhood or womanhood at that age. But why do we suppose that manhood or womanhood is reached at that number of years? Why not at twenty? Twenty is an even number. It is just twice ten. Why not give the right to vote at twenty? Or if that is too early, why not wait until thirty? Why, I ask again, do we suppose a boy enters into his manhood at twenty-one?

The reason is an old one. It comes from far back in our history. From such a dim distance does it come that we cannot even guess when it arose. For, very early in our history we made the discovery, or thought we did, that life is governed by sevens. At about seven years of age we lose our first set of teeth, acquire a stronger set adapted to stronger food, and we enter on a stronger growth. At about twice seven the voices of both boys and girls change from the voices of children to the voices of men and women ; other changes also take place at this time, which I shall explain more fully by and by. At about three times seven the boy or girl puts off his love of fun and begins to govern himself by prudence : we call him a man, and we give him the rights and duties of citizenship. By the time he is four times seven he or she is married and settled for life's great work. Not to speak of five or six times seven, I will add that at seven times seven his powers are at their fullest, and at ten times seven he has earned the right to

rest. Thus, in very early time, when we were ignorant and superstitious, we thought that the number seven had something mystical about it. Perhaps you yourself have met a remnant of the old superstition in the saying that our bodies change entirely every seven years. It was the influence of this superstition, I suppose, which caused us to select the number three times seven as the time for giving a man the right to vote.

Now, I do not believe at all in the number seven, and I hope you don't. I do not believe that the number seven has any more influence over us than the number six, or any other number, and I hope you don't. I do not believe that our bodies change particle by particle every seven years, and I hope you don't. Still, we know that our bodies are always changing, particle by particle ; and we know that infancy changes into childhood, childhood into youth, youth into manhood, manhood into age, and age into death, and we know that these changes mark out quite clearly the periods of our

lives. And since they take place at about the times our ancestors thought them to take place, there is no harm to us (provided we do not believe in some mysterious power of the number seven) in thinking of them as coming at the age of seven or of some multiple of seven. It is of these changes I wish to speak in this chapter; I have only referred to the question of voting at twenty-one to introduce the subject. And now let us study these changes in their order.

I. *Infancy.*—The period from birth to seven years of age is known as infancy. In infancy we expect nothing from the child. All we ask is that he shall grow. We feed him carefully with nutritious food, and we require him to go to bed early, that he may sleep long and well, and grow in stature. We place him, if possible, when old enough, in a kindergarten, that he may grow healthfully in mind. We speak to him gently, that he may grow healthfully in his affections. We carefully teach him the wrong of untruth, that he may grow healthfully in con-

science. We bathe him daily, that he may grow healthfully in his love of purity, in his hatred of nastiness, in his love of exercise, and in his hatred of laziness. All this we do tenderly for our children in infancy.

II. *Childhood.*—The period from seven to fourteen is called childhood. During childhood, we are still anxious for growth and for healthful growth. We begin, however, to put more care on the boy or girl, and we look anxiously to see how he or she takes up the cares we place upon him. If he does his errands well, we are pleased. If he bathes thoroughly, doing most of the scrubbing himself, we are pleased. If he takes to his school tasks lovingly, we are pleased. If he never tells untruths, if he be manly, pure-minded, modest, but brave and generous, how we love him ! At this time we begin to tell him something more about himself. We teach him that he has a body, and that the body has organs,— heart, stomach, lungs, liver, kidneys, and all the rest ; we teach him, too, the uses of these organs.

At this time we give him a book like this to help him to study himself. But the thing which it seems to me most distinguishes our childhood is our growth in modesty. In infancy, the child was willing to be bathed by mother or nurse, but in childhood he shrinks from exposing his person to the gaze of any, even of his own mother. This growth in modesty begins even before his seventh year. Of all this I shall have something more to say hereafter.

III. *Youth.*—The period from fourteen to twenty-one we call youth. In youth we still expect the boy or girl to grow in stature, in modesty, in mind, in knowledge, in strength of character, in truthfulness, in cleanliness; we still expect him to take much exercise, much wholesome food, to hate all intoxicants or stimulants, and to become more manly or more womanly every day. The cares we put on the youth are more taxing than those we put on the child, but we are just as careful not to overload one as the other. During youth, the boy or girl

learns more about himself, and especially does he learn how not to abuse his budding powers. In youth the voice changes, the beard begins to grow, and boys and girls who have heretofore found their chief pleasure in the society of their own sex, now begin to find pleasure in the society of the other sex. All this I shall speak of still farther on.

IV. *Early Manhood.* — The period from twenty-one to thirty-five is called early manhood. During this time most persons marry. Marriage is that solemn compact between one man and one woman wherein they agree to forsake all others and to love and forbear with one another so long as either shall live. To our marriage it is our duty to bring pure and modest bodies. The man or woman who is not good and modest in childhood reaps a terrible harvest in manhood or womanhood. Of all this, too, I may find it convenient to speak again, later.

V. *Middle Life.* — The period from thirty-five to about seventy is called middle

life. It is in middle life that our powers are at their best. Then we plan great enterprises and carry them out. Then we begin to know the joy of sacrifice and of toiling and dying, if need be, for wife, children and country.

VI. *Old Age.* VII. *Extreme Old Age.* — From about seventy to about eighty-four we may call the period old age, and from about eighty-four until the end we may call the period extreme old age. In old age and extreme old age our highest pleasure is to be honoured by those who are younger. The duty of those of us who are in age or extreme old age is to accept gratefully and pleasantly the respect and honour of those who are younger; and the duty of those who are younger is to yield loving and hearty service and honour to those who are older. In old age we are no longer honoured for what we can do, but for what we have done. In old age, we no longer sacrifice for our children, but our children sacrifice themselves for us. Beautiful is old age when all before it has been beautiful.

Thus we see that it is easy to divide life into different stages, and to give to these different stages names. We see, too, that it is convenient to use the number seven to mark off these stages, and we see that for many thousands of years we have been accustomed so to use it. And we find that we can use that number without thinking that there is anything mystical or strange or remarkable about it. Once more, we see that each of these stages or ages has its characteristic: the characteristic of infancy is innocence; the characteristic of childhood is modesty; the characteristic of youth is the attraction of sex, — I mean the pleasure each sex begins to feel in the company and conversation of the other; the characteristic of early manhood is marriage, and pleasure in the establishment of a home; the characteristic of middle life is the joy of sacrifice; the characteristic of old age is the willingness to receive sacrifice and honour from our children; and the characteristic of extreme old age, if we reach it,

is the gradual and slow decay of all our powers. Through all these stages you and I must go, unless we are sooner cut off by death. Every one enters upon this course through the gate called birth, and goes out of it by the gate called death. Both birth and death are mysteries ; we cannot tell what lies beyond either. We do not need to know, and we do not ask to know. Our duty is to pass through all the stages which we call life so wisely that when we come to the second gate we shall no more dread it than we dreaded the first.





III.

MODESTY DAWNS IN CHILDHOOD.

THE little child in his infancy has innocence, but not modesty. He is perfectly willing to expose his person to the gaze of others. He frolics in his bath-tub, wholly nude, and wholly indifferent to the number of those looking on. But there comes a change. There comes a time when he shrinks from undressing before others. As he passes out of infancy into childhood, he reaches a time when he would rather not disrobe before the eyes of even his own mother. What does this change of feeling mean? It means that the little boy is growing modest.

I have sometimes seen photographs of babies taken without any clothing, or with but little clothing. I think they are beautiful. The little one has not

yet reached the age when modesty dawns. It gives me pleasure, therefore, to look at the laughing face, the fat legs, the round arms, the square toes, of the infant; but if I were to hear of parents compelling a child of fourteen to be photographed nude, I should feel pained. I never did hear of parents so cruel, and I do not believe I ever shall.

I cannot name the age at which a child begins to grow modest. I do not think that all children begin to grow modest at the same age. I presume that most begin to feel a sense of modesty before they are seven years old; perhaps many begin to feel it long before that age; I do not think that many wait till long after that age. But some time before the age of seven, or between the age of seven and fourteen, modesty dawns on us all. In infancy we have innocence; in childhood, modesty. Now, what is modesty?

I am sure I do not know how you will answer that question. I hardly know how I shall answer it myself. But one thing I am sure of: I am sure that mod-

esty is not shame. A boy or girl of fourteen who is not modest ought to be ashamed ; but no boy or girl of fourteen who is modest ought to be ashamed. Modesty in childhood is beautiful, just as innocence in infancy is beautiful. It is immodesty which is shameful. So, whatever answer you and I give to the question, What is modesty? we shall surely not say that modesty is shame. We shall say that modesty is the very opposite of shame.

But now answer this question : Is modesty the same thing as self-consciousness? You know what I mean by self-consciousness. I presume you have been self-conscious at some time yourself. At any rate, you have seen it in others. A child in his infancy is seldom or never self-conscious. If he grows self-conscious afterward we cease to love him. We then say that he is spoiled. Now, is this self-consciousness, which none of us loves, the same thing as this modesty, which all of us respect? By no means. Self-consciousness is sin ; modesty is holiness. Mod-

esty cannot be the same thing as self-consciousness, therefore, because modesty comes from God. What do I mean by saying that modesty comes from God? I will answer that question in my next paragraph.

Please tell me who teaches me modesty? Is it my Sunday-school teacher? Is it my day-school teacher? Is it my pastor or my father? Does any book teach it to me? No; even my own mother does not teach it to me. It is God who teaches me modesty. A good mother when she sees, or thinks she sees, that her little boy or little girl would rather not undress in her presence, respects that feeling in her child, but she says nothing about it. She says nothing because she does not wish to mar God's teaching. She says nothing, for fear of turning her little child's modesty into shame or self-consciousness. She leaves him to bathe alone, asking the privilege of afterwards inspecting his neck, ears, eyes, hair, and teeth, to see that he has done his work thoroughly. No; it is not our

mothers who teach us modesty, it is God. So now we begin to see what modesty is: it is something which is taught us by God.

If God teaches us modesty, then to be modest is to obey God; to be immodest is to disobey God: to be immodest is to sin. Modesty, therefore, is a law of our nature; it is taught us by the Father of our nature, God. The child who is modest, in so far, is a child of God; the child who is immodest, secures his own disapproval, the scorn of his fellows, the grief of his parents, and, I fear, the anger of God. See, then, what an obligation is put upon me to be modest: my own self-respect tells me to be modest; obedience to my parents obliges me to be modest; the desire to secure the love of my companions helps me to be modest; and the love of God constrains me to be modest. Let us study some instances of modesty, in order that we may understand the lesson better.

Boys should learn to swim, and the time to learn is in childhood: at some time

between seven and fourteen a boy ought to learn to swim. Parents desire that their sons should learn to swim, although they are most anxious for their safety while they are learning. A good parent will not permit his anxiety for his child's safety to hinder his boy from learning to swim, and a good son will not permit his fondness for the sport to lead him into the water at such times as his parents disapprove. You see, there is an obligation on both sides. The parent is under obligation to consult the child's education and health, and the child is under obligation to respect his father's requests. Both father and son must obey. There is one word which is higher and greater than Modesty : that word is Obedience. Modesty is only one kind of Obedience. The parent must obey the law which requires him to plan for his child's health, his manliness, and his pleasure ; the boy must obey the law which requires him to respect the wishes of his father, not only in letter, but in spirit. But in this chapter I am speaking, not of obedience,

but of modesty, to which subject I now return.

Boys learn to swim in groups. As they lay aside their clothing, each places his hands over that part of his person which he is least willing to expose to the gaze of his companions. Who tells a boy to do this? Has his father, his mother, his teacher, ever told him to do so? No, indeed, God has taught him. The parts which the boy covers with his hands are just as holy, just as honourable, as any other part of his body, but yet each boy instinctively wishes to keep those parts from the eyes of his companions ; he wants to keep them private,—that is, he wants to keep them to himself. We call these parts the private parts. I do not think that the youngest boys going swimming often cover their private parts with their hands, — the instinct to do so has not yet come to them ; they are not old enough. But as a boy gets to be about fourteen, this instinct of modesty has surely come to him.

Sometimes boys provide themselves

with close-fitting short breeches, which they put on before going into the water. But whether they wear any bathing-dress or not, so soon as the water covers their persons, and their modesty is satisfied, they shout aloud in the glorious sport. It is a great joy to be naked. It is a joy to be naked even in one's chamber ; but it is a greater joy in summer to be naked out-of-doors. To plunge into the warm water, to dive to its depths, to swim fearlessly on its surface, to triumph over it, to feel your victory, — is n't it glorious, boys, is n't it grand ?

Now, wait a minute, — let me ask a question. If modesty is one's unwillingness to expose one's person to the gaze of another, it is also an unwillingness to look at the person of another? Suppose, for instance, John has an opportunity, unknown to James, of seeing James entirely naked : would John be modest if he stayed to gaze at the naked James? No, he would not be modest, he would be immodest and mean. Modesty, then, demands that we refrain from gazing at the

naked person of another when that other is unwilling we should do so.

I have read a story of an old man who lived in ancient times, and who, having planted a vineyard, drank so much of the wine that he lay down in the sun in a drunken stupor. As he lay thus, his clothing became disarranged, and his private parts were exposed. One of his sons came along presently, and saw his drunken father in this shameful condition. Instead of feeling a sense of sorrow and shame at the sight, the brutal fellow ran away, and finding his two brothers, told them of what he had seen as a good joke. But the other boys were modest. They got a garment of skin and flung it over the shoulders of both. Then, walking backwards to the spot where their naked father lay, they let fall the garment to cover him. The first boy was a brute ; the other two were modest and honourable men. The father, awaking from his drunken sleep, and learning what had happened, cursed his son, who had first seen him, with terrible curses ; but he

blessed the others. From this story we learn that no man is modest who does not respect the modesty of others.

Thus we see that modesty comes to us in infancy. We see, too, that it comes to stay. It never afterward leaves us. Through childhood, youth, manhood, and age, it clings to us. But it brings knowledge. It brings responsibility. What that knowledge is, what that responsibility is, we are to discover later. In our next chapter we are to study how beauty and purity go with modesty.





IV.

MODESTY, BEAUTY, AND PURITY.

I HAVE said that it is a great joy to be naked; it is also a duty sometimes to be naked. In no other way can we make ourselves clean and pure. Cold water, soap, towels, rubbing, once a day, or once a week at least. To-day I stood near a boy at the blackboard to help him in his algebra. He smelled as clean as if he had just come from his bath. I am getting to love that boy. How can I help it? I feel sure he is clean, and I hope he is pure. What is the difference between being clean and being pure?

A boy, when he bathes or when he prays, goes to his own room and shuts the door. Whether he falls on his knees to pray, or takes off his clothes to wash, he is alone. His prayer makes him

pure within ; his bath makes him clean without. Prayer makes his soul pure ; water makes his body clean. A pure soul cannot have impure thoughts any more than a clean body can have vile smells. Of course, when as little children we begin to learn to pray or to wash, we must have our mothers with us to show us how. But as we grow older, our blessed mothers, little by little, leave us to ourselves. We are alone with our naked souls when we pray, and we are alone with our naked bodies when we bathe. Our sincerity makes us wish to be alone when we pray, and our modesty makes us wish to be alone when we bathe : perhaps sincerity and modesty are much the same thing.

If I were to admit another person to my room when I bathe or pray, the shame would be alike on him and on me. If another person were to peep into my room when I was bathing, or were to listen at my door when I was praying, the shame would be on him alone. The only person to whom I am willing to show my naked

body is my physician, and then only in case of necessity. If you are calling on me, and my physician is announced, you rise instantly to depart. You do not need any book on etiquette to tell you to go, your modesty tells you. The only person to whom I am willing to show my naked soul is some trusted friend, a pastor, a teacher, a mother. If you know that I have had a secret reposed in me by some one, you do not try to find it out; your sincerity forbids your attempting to do so. You do not ask a physician what ails his patient, and you do not ask a confidant what troubles the confider. The naked soul and the naked body are sacred.

And there is not only a joy and a duty in being naked, there is a beauty in nakedness too. The human form is beautiful. A poet calls it, "The human form divine." Now, since modesty prevents our looking upon any human form other than our own to enjoy its beauty, the sculptor comes to our aid and chisels a form out of marble. By means of the

art of the sculptor we are able to enjoy the beauty of the human form without offending our modesty; we can dwell with pleasure on the strength of the arms, the breadth of the chest, the passion or repose of the face, the stoutness of the legs, the attitude of the head, the pose of the body; and all these things awake in us lofty thoughts, without shocking our modesty. To make sure he shall not offend our modesty, and so disgust us, the sculptor often chisels a bit of clothing or a leaf over the private parts. Have you ever seen a statue of Hercules? If so, you have seen a piece of marble chiselled into the form of a strong man. You see a strong man in repose. Hercules was the fabled god of strength. The idea of the sculptor is to represent a strong, reposeful man. Observe how well he has succeeded. You see a poem in stone. You know that man is strong, although he is doing nothing to prove it. You do not wish him to prove it; you see his strength and feel it, and it seems to give you strength to look at it.

But perhaps you say that you do not quite understand how it can be wrong to look at the naked form of another living person, and yet not wrong to chisel a naked human form out of marble. I think I understand the reason, and if you will carefully follow me through my next two paragraphs, I think you will understand it too.

A few days ago, with hundreds of other teachers, men and women, I attended a teachers' meeting in one of the largest cities of Connecticut. Our session was held in the assembly-room of the city high school. In one corner of that room, high over the blackboards, was a statue of Mercury. You could almost think that the brick and mortar had parted, and the heavenly runner was bursting in upon us with some message from Jupiter. What joy of good tidings in his face! What strength in his sinewy, untired legs! What grace in the bounding body! What welcome news in the beckoning finger! "Ho, there, John Smith, I've got good news for you!" "For *me*?"

says John. "Yes, for *you*." And every one who sees the statue, sees himself as he would like to be if he were carrying joyful intelligence to some one else.

Now, do you think those marble legs ought to have on trousers? Ought the principal of that high school to put a cloak over the naked body? "No," you say, and you smile as you say it. "No," you say; "he ought no more to cover up those beautiful legs than that beautiful face or beautiful finger." But why do you say so? Because you feel that the beauty, and the story in it, is subjective. The beauty is not in the marble or in the plaster, it is in your mind. You see yourself in the marble or plaster, and it is always right to look on one's naked self. So we see that the sculptor who chisels a naked figure out of marble does not shock our modesty; he is a friend, a teacher, an inspirer, a cheerer to us all, and we honour and thank him, if he does his duty well.

From all that has been said in this chapter we may deduce the following

conclusions : 1. I have a body in which I dwell. 2. This body of mine is beautiful, not in face alone, but in arm, hand, leg, foot, as well. It is my duty to keep it beautiful, by keeping it clean. I, who live in this body, am beautiful, for I love to think great thoughts. It is my duty to keep myself beautiful within, by keeping myself pure within. 3. This clean body is sacred to my pure self. In order to help me to keep it sacred, I have an instinct given me, which I call modesty.

Professor Amiel says that my modesty is the sign and safeguard of a mystery. Of what mystery does he speak? Have patience for a letter or two, and you shall know. In my next letter I show how we exhibit our modesty in the finest way,—I mean the delicacy and respect which we show to one of the opposite sex when we meet in society.





V.

MODESTY AS BETWEEN THE SEXES.

ALL human beings have bodies ; these bodies have legs to carry them about, and arms to earn their living. Over the body is the head, which directs the whole. The head has organs of thinking, seeing, smelling, tasting, which are alike in male and female. The legs and arms have bones, muscles, joints, muscles, arteries, veins, which are alike in male and female. The body has heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, stomach, bladder, which are also alike in male and female. So far, male and female are alike, and it is perfectly proper that in school both boys and girls should study from the same text and in the same class all those organs of their being which are alike in their nature and their functions.

But at some time between the ages of seven and fourteen both boys and girls learn that some of the organs in the body of a boy differ from the corresponding organs in the body of a girl. They observe that this fact divides us into two divisions, called sexes. They observe that the sexes dress differently and have different kinds of work. Yet they know that the sexes are not two kinds of human beings, but corresponding parts of the same kind. The organs in which the two sexes differ are situated in that part of the body which in our last chapter we called the private parts: these organs are also known as the sexual organs. When boys and girls read of the sexual organs they no longer desire to be taught together; modesty forbids. When they study these subjects they need a book like this,—a book which they can read in private, and recite, if they recite at all, singly and privately to their parents.

Now, notice, I beg of you, that it is not your teachers who say that boys and girls shall not study these subjects together; it

is the boys and girls who instinctively feel that they do not wish to study them together, and the teachers simply respect their modesty. It is not your parents who forbid you as brothers and sisters to study these things together ; it is you yourselves who prefer not to study these subjects together, and your parents simply and gladly respect your modesty. It is not our authority, but your modesty, which determines this question. So you study these functions of your body privately ; but you need not be shy in your study. Everybody knows that you have these organs, and everybody expects that you will understand their use and abuse. You need not hide from your parents, therefore, the fact that you are studying these things ; at the same time you need not talk about your study of them. There is one rule which it is always safe to follow ; that rule is, Be modest.

In olden time people were not so modest as we are now. In very ancient time the immodesty of men and women in habit and in conversation was something

shocking ; and even in later time, say only three hundred years ago (at about the time Shakspeare lived), men and women were far less modest than now. When we read the history of those times we read it with pity. When we read the poetry written then, — much of which is grand, — we are compelled to forgive many immodest speeches. We read their writings with two feelings, — a thankfulness that we live in purer times, and a pity that men with thoughts otherwise so great could be so immodest. I think that both boys and girls ought to read Shakspeare ; I think that no writer approaches him in many-sided views of life : but I think, too, that no boy or girl ought to read him who has not learned to be modest, and who is not willing to forgive the people of his age for liking so much immodesty, — something which society of our time despises and shuns.

The names given to the several parts of the body you may learn from a book on anatomy when you are older ; those names are not necessary for us to learn now.

What we are now trying to learn is: (1) that boys and girls are made alike in all respects, except as to their sexual organs; and (2), that because these organs are different in their formation and functions, we are divided into two divisions, called sexes.

If this be the only difference, why do we dress the two sexes differently? Why do we give each sex different work? Why do we think it improper that boys and girls at school should study together about their sexual organs? There is but one answer to all these questions, and you may think what it is before you let your eyes fall upon the next paragraph.

The answer to all these questions is, Modesty. It is my modesty which makes me unwilling to teach a class of boys and girls about their sexual organs; it is the modesty of the girls which makes them unwilling; it is the modesty of the boys which makes them unwilling. Why do we dress the sexes differently? It is custom in part; but it is modesty which dictates the custom. When a girl is

seven years old, she is quite content if her skirts reach to her knees. But as she grows older her skirts become longer and longer,—she is growing more and more modest. Why do we give each sex different work? It is custom in part, but it is modesty which dictates the custom. No man wishes his wife who is nursing a baby to go abroad into the fields to work; the custom has grown up, therefore, of giving to women the work of the home, while the men toil abroad. Why do boys and girls in society never allude in conversation to the sexual organs? But I think I had better begin a new paragraph to speak about boys and girls in society.

By "boys and girls in society," I mean boys and girls when they meet at school, in the playground, at their homes, in evening-parties, in the streets, on the skating-pond, as they ride or walk,—I mean their meeting in any place, and for any purpose. And I ask, why would a noble and manly boy rather burn his tongue with a hot iron than speak to a pure and womanly girl

a single word, or give her a single look, which should cause her to think of the sexual organs? Or why would a pure and womanly girl rather die than speak to a boy of the sexual organs? And why does a manly boy look with scorn on a girl who would do so? And why does a pure girl consider it an insult when an unmanly boy thus speaks to her? And why does the father of that girl sometimes follow up that boy with horsewhip or shotgun? The answer to all these questions is, Modesty. Our modesty is a spark of divinity within us. So long as we keep it pure, we are safe; when we violate it, oh, the shame, the misery, the sin, and the sorrow!

A good girl never allows a boy to speak to her except in the most modest and respectful way. A good girl can by a look make a bad boy ashamed of himself. It is not so much the girl who looks, as it is the modesty of the girl which looks through her eyes. A girl cannot pretend to be modest, she must be modest. All the pretension to modesty in all the world

never made a girl modest ; and a girl who is modest has no need to pretend. It is very difficult to pretend to be modest, but it is quite easy to secure respect when you are modest.

A good boy never speaks to a girl, nor wishes to speak to her, except in the most respectful and modest way. He may shake hands with her if she first offers to do so ; he may bow to her if she first bows to him ; he may pick up her fallen book ; he may assist her into, or out of, a carriage ; he may offer his arm to her when, with her mother's approval, he is attending her through a crowded street ; he may — and does — rise to give her a seat in the parlour or in the street-car ; he may sharpen her blunt lead-pencil ; he may talk with her, dine with her, sing with her, worship with her : but he may never lay his hand on her person ; he may never do anything — nor does he wish to do anything — which shall tempt her to forget her modesty.

May he also dance with her? That is a question which I never answer. I

always return it to be answered by the one who asks. Can he dance with her without tempting her in the slightest degree to forget her modesty? or she tempting him to forget his modesty? If so, what harm is there in dancing? But if, on the contrary, there is danger of the boy's forgetting his modesty, or of tempting the girl to forget hers, for one brief moment as they go whirling around in the waltz, it were a thousand times better not to dance at all. We can afford to have our girls ignorant of the cotillon, but we cannot afford to have them forget their modesty. Every person must decide this question for himself and for herself.

No man respects and loves a woman unless he thinks she is modest and pure, and no woman respects and loves a man unless she thinks he is modest and pure. If a girl thinks she can make a good boy like her by sly winks and nods, or by any actions which show that she does not worship her modesty and purity, she makes a terrible mistake; and if any boy thinks he can make a good girl like him in such a

way, he makes a terrible mistake. A girl is safe when she values her modesty and purity above everything else; a boy is safe when he values his modesty and purity above everything else. When boys and girls, men and women, meet in society, the ground on which they meet is the common respect of each other's modesty and purity. If any one by a word, an act, or a look shows he is not modest and pure, or has not been accustomed to the society of the modest and pure, he is afterwards excluded by common consent from the society of the others. Such a person must not complain, it is his own fault.

But what temptation have I to forget my modesty? If between the ages of seven and fourteen I have already begun to be modest, why should I, between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, be tempted to forget to be modest?

We have another instinct. This second instinct comes later to keep the first company. Modesty comes first to make us pure; Love comes next to make us strong.

The first is the safeguard of the second.
The second is the complement of the
first. What I mean, you will better un-
derstand when you have read the next few
chapters.





VI.

A WEDDING IN JUNE.

I GO to a wedding every June. I get my invitation during late May or early June. And this is the way I am invited to the wedding.

When the young leaves of the apple-tree begin to whisper to the mild May evening wind, I know that the time is near. The next morning I look for my invitation, and the next, and the next, and the next. At length it comes. When I see the bridegroom blushing, I feel myself invited.

That is my invitation. I want no other. The apple-tree and I understand each other. We are brothers. He expects me. I shall surely be there. When I see the first faint tinge of red among the leaves, I clap my hands; it is just as beautiful and

wonderful as it ever was. "Yes, yes," I cry to him, "I have your invitation, I shall surely come to your wedding."

Then I go home to get ready. It takes one a long time to get ready to go to a friend's wedding. It takes me some little time to get ready to go to the wedding of the apple-tree. I first lay aside my every-day thoughts, as if they were every-day clothes and not fit for a wedding. I next take a bath of forgetfulness: I forget all my mistakes in the past, and I forget all my dreams for the future. Then I clothe myself with Now. Did you ever wear that garment? That is the garment which God wears. We must wear it if we would have him visit us.

When I go to the wedding I do not knock at the door. To do so would be to insult my brother and host, the apple-tree. I go in and sit down; I know I am welcome. The apple-tree knows I am glad to come.

Only those who have on wedding-garments are welcome. Only those who have eyes to see and ears to hear are invited.

Only those who come alone are invited. Come, then, let us go to the wedding of the apple-tree. You under your tree, and I under mine, each being alone, nobody nigh to say, "How pretty!" "How fragrant!" "How splendid!" thus let us sit down to study the great mystery.

For this marriage contains a mystery. The mystery is, How Life is continued on the Earth. If there were no apple-marriages in June there would be no apples in October. And the October apples contain seeds which, planted next spring, will grow into other apple-trees, which shall bloom and fruit in their turn ; and so the life of the apple goes on and on forever.

At the wedding of the apple we do not talk, we do not sing, we do not play or dance; we worship. I under my apple-tree, and you under yours, are worshipping.

We worship a thought of God. For the marriage of the apple-tree is a part of the mystery of sex ; and God made us male and female. Surely if God is God, he could have found some other way to

continue life on the earth than by fathers and mothers. But he has chosen to continue it by means of sex, and we can as plainly see the thought in the apple-tree as in animals and men.

When I go to the marriage of the apple-tree in June, I sit and think. I take such contentment as comes, and am grateful. I hear the hum of the bees over my head, I see the modesty of the bride and groom as they try to hide themselves among the green leaves, I look off at the far horizon, I watch the waving grass, and I know that God is over, in, beyond, and beneath it all. I do not know what God is, but here I am in the very presence of one of his thoughts.

For it is, I repeat, a thought of God to maintain life on earth by means of sex. Plants, animals, men,—male and female, created he them. The apple has a father as much as you or I have.

We know that life is continued by means of sex; but how it is continued is the mystery. As you lie beneath the apple-tree in June you ask, What is this thing

we call life? Whence comes it? Whither goes it? What is it for? We know that it is continued on the earth by means of sex; but how it is continued we do not know, whence it came to the earth we do not know, why it came here we do not know. You ask the apple-tree, but the apple-tree does not know; you inquire of the blue sky, but the blue sky is silent; you question the far horizon, but the far horizon does not answer; you ask your soul, but your soul cannot guess. It is all a mystery.

If it is all a mystery, why should we go forth to study it in June, or at any other time? If you ask that question, you have not been invited to go. You do not understand. You need not go. Stay at home; play your games; wait till you get your invitation. Perhaps, however, you will understand it all a little better when you come to read the next chapter. For though we do not understand the mystery, we do know its method, and that we shall explain in our next chapter.



VII.

THE OFFICE OF THE FLOWER.

AN apple has had a father and a mother. So have you and I. The apple's parents, however, are in the same individual; my parents were two individuals: so were yours.

If we remove the five green sepals and the five white petals of the apple-blossom, we have the essential flower left. The five pale-green central points, about a half-inch long, are called pistils; the twenty, thirty, thirty-five, forty, or other-multiple-of-five points which stand around the pistils are called stamens. The pistils are the female parts of the flower; the stamens are the male parts of the flower.

When the bloom is ripest, the heads of the stamens produce a yellow substance which is called pollen. The pollen re-

sembles a fine yellow dust; one often sees it on flowers. The bees come and, crawling over the flower to sip its honey, carelessly brush the pollen from the stamens, which, adhering to their bodies, is carried to the tips of the pistils. Or the winds may carry the pollen from the ends of the stamens to the tips of the pistils. Or the pollen may float or fall from the stamens to the pistils. In some way must the pollen go from the stamens to the pistils, or there is no marriage. It is the passing of the pollen from one to the other which constitutes the marriage of the apple.

The pollen is the germ of life. The pistil receives this germ of life, which works its way down the pistil to the ovary on which the pistil stands. The ovary is thus made alive, or fructified. The leaves drop away, the stamens and pistils drop away, but the ovary below grows; it grows on through July, August, and September; in October we pick that ovary from the bough, and call it an apple.

If the stamens produced no pollen, there could be no fruit. If there were no stamens to produce the pollen, there could be no fruit. If there were no pistils to receive the pollen, there could be no fruit. The pollen is the fertilizing principle. How it fertilizes we do not know: that is the mystery.

Take the apple you have plucked in your hand. You hold a mystery. Do not, for once, eat it greedily, but look on it reverently. It is a fruit: all fruit is the result of a marriage. The marriage of its parents took place last June, when you and I were invited to the wedding, and when we sat still to think of the mystery above us. The real marriage we did not see. The real marriage took place when the pollen was carried from the stamens to the pistils. We know that it was carried by wind, by gravity, or by insect; we know that the pollen is the fertilizing germ; we know that in some way the pollen caused the young apple to be. How it caused it to be we do not know; that, I say, is the mystery.

And this apple not only came from a mystery, but it contains a mystery. For, if we open it, we find seeds, and the seeds contain future apple-trees, future blossoms and future fruits. The apple you hold is not made for you alone, it is made as well to hand on the life of the apple to future, far-off generations. Eat your apple now, if you will; but as you eat, think of how its life came to be, and how it contains life yet to be.

And do other trees have flowers and fruits? Does the elm, the maple, the chestnut, the cherry, the peach, have flowers? That is as much as to ask whether these trees are male and female. The answer to each question is, Yes. Sometimes, however, the male parts are in one tree, and the female parts in another. The wind and the bees must then carry the pollen from one tree to the other.

And do all other plants have flowers? Does the strawberry, the tomato, the potato, the blackberry, the clover, the daisy, the corn, the grass, have flowers? That is again to ask whether these plants are

male and female. The answer, once again, is, Yes. The same thought of the Creator is in each. Life is handed on by sex. It is true that there is a lower series of plants which have spores instead of seeds, and they tell me that flowers are not necessary to produce spores. But in all the higher divisions of plants life is continued by seeds, and seeds are produced by flowers.

Flowers are therefore the symbol of life; they are the promise of life to be. In the dead of winter we place flowers in our window to teach ourselves that no matter how white the ground or how bare the boughs, there is a spring to come. When the spring appears, and the flowers clothe the trees, we think of the fruit to be. When we dress the bride with flowers, we think of children yet unborn. When we place flowers on the bosoms of our dead, we typify our faith in the life to come.

Here, then, we end our chapter. And we end in as much wonder as we began. For though we now know the method, we

do not know the secret. We know that the purpose of the flower is to continue vegetable life on the earth. We have found that that life is continued by the passing of the pollen from the male to the female organs. But how the pollen fertilizes the flower we do not know; that is the mystery.

“ Little flower in the crannied wall,
Let me pluck you out of the crannies.
If I could tell what you are, flower, stem,
and all,
I could tell what God is and what man is! ”





VIII.

THE BEAUTY AND MYSTERY OF SEX.

WHAT is the difference between an animal and a plant? If you answer that a plant is rooted to the ground, while an animal has power of locomotion, I shall say that some animals are as firmly planted as is a tree. If you say that an animal can think and a plant cannot, I shall answer that a sponge cannot think any more than can a rose. If you say that an animal has a stomach and can eat, while a plant has no stomach and cannot eat, I shall reply that some plants catch and eat insects. There are yet other answers I might make, but I have said enough to show you that I doubt whether there be any fundamental difference between plants and animals.

One other reason why I doubt the existence of any difference between the two is that each perpetuates life on the earth in the same way. Each does it, under God, by means of sex.

I do not mean, of course, that the life of an individual is continued, but that the life of the race is continued. The old must die. If the old were not to die, the earth would soon be covered, yes, piled up, with feeble old plants, feeble old animals, feeble old men. It is necessary for the old to go, and it is necessary for the young to come. Death and birth—the two great mysteries—keep the old earth forever young.

You love your grandfather, but you would not like to be your grandfather: he is too old. Your grandfather loves you, but he would not be you: you are too young. You look forward with joy to the life before you: he, with a peace as great as your joy, looks forward to the gradual decline and the rest beyond. The sheaf of wheat on the sleeping old man's coffin is as beautiful as the rosebud

in the tiny fist of an infant in its cradle. It is right and beautiful that the old should go, and that the young should come. And how do they come?

They come, under God, by means of sex. God made us male and female. God made plants and animals in sexes. Man is an animal. In both plants and animals the male organs furnish the germ of life ; in both plants and animals the female organs receive the germ, nourish it, and bring it into existence as a unit. When the work of the female organs is done, we say in one case that the seed or fruit falls ; in the other we say that a child is born.

The fertilizing germ of plants we call pollen ; the fertilizing germ of animals we call semen. If the pollen of plants do not pass from the male to the female organs, there can be no fructification ; if the semen of animals do not pass from the male organs to the female organs, there is no conception. Fructification in the plant takes place when the embryo begins to form in the ovary ; conception

in the animal takes place when the embryo begins to form in the womb. How fructification or conception takes place, we do not know ; it is all a mystery. We have already seen how fructification takes place in the apple ; let us now study it in the fish.

The mother-fish lays her eggs in some sunny nook of the stream. When her eggs are laid, her husband comes and pours from his body the fertilizing germs over them. The germs from the milt of the male enter the roe, or eggs, of the fish, and make them to be alive. The life in the egg warmed by the rays of the sun grows through many long days, and at length the little fish burst the shell and swim out. The little fish are born. Each comes from an egg. All animals are born from ova. But what keeps the little fish alive, what nourishes it, what does it live on before it is born?

Take the common hen's egg. Boil it. Do you notice a little central point in the yolk? Perhaps that is to be the heart of

the unborn chick. And the other organs,—lungs, liver, stomach, brain, eyes,—they must all be there too. Not formed yet, but yet they are there; they exist in embryo. And the “white” of the egg, what is that for? May it not be for the nourishment of the little chick until it is born? In animals which retain the ovum in the womb until the embryo is grown, the embryo is fed directly from the blood of the mother. No wonder our mothers love us; no wonder a manly boy would die for his mother.

But it is not one in a thousand boys who is called on to die for his mother; yet every boy is called on to be good to her. He shows his goodness, not once in some grand way, but always in a hundred little ways. He does her errands with care; he remembers her headache when he closes the door; he brings a flower for her hair, a kiss for her lips, a fruit for her mouth, wood for her fire, a story for her ears, a good report from school for her heart. He does all this while he is still a child; but when he reaches the age of

fourteen, and learns what his mother did for him before he was born, then he has a new motive to be good to her. He did it before because he loved her ; he does it now because he loves her a great deal more. Let us now study a short lesson in physiology.

Glands are organs. Their office is to secrete certain agents from the blood. The glands which secrete saliva are called salivary glands ; they are situated under and near the tongue, and are alike in both male and female. The gland which secretes bile is called the liver ; it is situated under and near the stomach, and is found alike in both male and female. The glands which secrete semen are called the testes ; they are found in the male only. The glands which secrete the ova are called ovaries ; they are situated near the womb, and are found in the female only.

If the glands which secrete saliva, or the gland which secretes bile, are diseased, our digestion is impaired. If the glands which secrete semen are removed,

the individual can never become a father ; if the glands which secrete ova are removed, the individual can never become a mother.

When these last-named glands are in a healthful condition, we come to reverence the other sex. This reverence does not begin until some time between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, and is shown by our increasing courtesy to the other sex. This courtesy is beautiful to see, and we who are older love to see it. It is natural and it is right. We may call it the instinct of sex ; or we may say that it is a manifestation of that instinct. The instinct of modesty comes to us in childhood to make us pure ; the instinct of sex comes to us in youth to make us strong. Each is beautiful, because it is natural ; each is necessary to continue purity and life upon the earth ; and each has its relation to the great mysteries of birth and death. And now please study with me reverently the thought of the next chapter.



IX.

THE TWO GREAT MYSTERIES.

THIS morning is the 31st of December,—the last day of the year. I awoke at about the usual hour and sat down to breakfast. We partook of our morning meal in cheerfulness, expecting every minute to hear good news from the little sick son of a neighbour. The news came at length: Willie was dead.

Breakfast is long since finished, prayers are said, it is half-past nine, and I sit down to write. The other members of my family are going about their morning duties. All are subdued. Traces of tears you see on some cheeks. We shall never welcome a certain little boy whom we loved to our home and table again. On Christmas Day he was last here, to bring

his little Christmas present. The mother of this house has gone to carry what poor consolation she can to the mother of that house. I look across the snow at the chimney of my neighbour, and pause in my writing to think of the great mystery which sits at my neighbour's fireside. Where is his little boy now? Where has he gone? To heaven, we say; but where is heaven? That we do not know; where life goes is a mystery.

How and why life goes, is also a mystery. Two or three days ago I held Willie in my lap: how I did love to hear him talk! What a pleasure to watch his opening mind! It was like watching the opening of a flower-bud. Why did all that intelligence fade? How did it fade? "Fever," the doctor says. And what is fever? And why did the heart beat slower and slower, till at twelve o'clock last night it stopped? And why did the little mind sink fainter and fainter out of sight? It is all a mystery; I cannot understand it. The ending of this life is a mystery.

So is the beginning. Birth also is a mystery. We know that the ovaries of the mother secrete a tiny egg which descends to the womb. We know that the germ from the body of the father enters the egg as it lies in the womb and causes it to become alive, to grow to be a child, and by and by to be born. But how? That is the mystery.

We know that the egg from the ovaries of the mother would pass on out of her body if the germ from the father did not impregnate it. We know that after the egg is impregnated by the germ from the sexual organs of the father, it lies in the mother's womb nine months before it is born. We know that it is growing all this time, and we know that it is alive; for during the latter part of her time the mother can feel it move. We know all this, but this is very little, very little indeed, compared to what we do not know. For no man can tell what life is. Every man is born of a woman; every man has had a father as well as a mother: but no man can tell what the life in him is, nor

how he got it from his father and mother. It is all a mystery.

What emotion follows the mystery of death? It is awe and grief. What instinct precedes the mystery of birth? It is modesty and secrecy. The woman about to become a mother keeps modestly to her own house and chamber. She knows that she carries about within her the mystery of a new and a young life, and she is awed by the knowledge. Perhaps she imparts her secret to some of her older children, and asks them to help her to keep it. As the hour approaches when the womb of the mother is to give up the little child it has held for nine months, the mother goes to her bed, and everybody in the house becomes anxious and still. This bed may be a death-bed to both mother and little child; no one can tell. The mysteries of birth and death are sometimes not far separated. As the little babe leaves the womb of its mother and passes down the vagina into the world, the mother suffers untold agony. The physician is summoned to aid, and when at last

the first faint wailing of the child is heard, and the groans of the mother are ceased, great is the rejoicing in the house for joy that a man is born into the world.

Let us suppose that mother and child live, that the mother recovers from her confinement, and the little child which came out of her womb begins to grow, to crow, to creep, to walk, to talk, and to go to school. You are a neighbour, and he visits your home frequently; every day you love him better; every day he winds a new cord about your heart. One morning a messenger comes to your door as one came to mine this morning, saying, "Willie is dead." "Dead!" you cry. "Will he no more come into my house with his toys, his games, and his rompings; no more climb into my lap and answer my questions? Shall I no more have his merry company as I work in my yard and garden? Dead! My heart will break! He was no kith nor kin to me, he was only a little boy, the son of a neighbour, but, O my God, how I loved him!"

There is nothing you can do. You can-

not call him back ; you cannot warm his wee cold feet ; you cannot dress him for his grave ; you cannot comfort the mother who bore him into the world, nor the father who gave him life, and so you decide to go to your work. That is what I decided to do at half-past nine this morning. But you see how little I 've written, and it is now evening : I can't write. I 've tried faithfully, and I can't. The memory of that sweet little face haunts me. Dead? What does that mean? It means only that the second great mystery has followed the first. The first mystery is, Life,— where does it come from? The second mystery is, Life,— where does it go to? We do not try to solve either mystery. We stand silent. We must put our trust in God. What else is there to do?

I wonder if, having read this letter, you catch anything of the meaning of Amiel when he says, "Modesty is the sign and safeguard of a mystery." At any rate, whether you understand Amiel or not, you

have learned enough to show you that you should be as modest and still when you hear of the great mystery of birth as you are awed and still when you hear of the great mystery death.





X.

THE URINARY ORGANS.

NOW, although we do not know what life is, we do know what is the chief agent in maintaining life : it is the blood. What then is the office of the blood?

The office (or business) of the blood is to carry good and fresh material to all parts of the body, and to carry off worn-out material. Every motion of my arm exhausts some little particles of the muscles of my arm ; the blood takes away these worn-out particles of the muscles and leaves fresh particles in their place. Every step I take wears out some portion of the muscles of my leg ; the blood comes and takes away the worn-out particles, and puts fresh ones in their place. I spend the forenoon in writing ; every thought I write exhausts some portion

of the brain ; the blood takes away the worn-out particles, and leaves fresh ones in their place. But what becomes of these worn-out particles of matter which the blood picks up ? Surely the blood must not retain them, for if it did, it would soon become a mass of worn-out and worthless matter. It must get rid of these impurities in some way : how is it done ?

1. By the lungs. We breathe in order to throw off the impurities which the blood has carried to the lungs.
2. By the skin. The skin is throwing off perspiration day and night, winter and summer.

3. By the kidneys. The kidneys are two glands situated near the backbone, in the hollow of the back, or where the body is smallest. The kidneys secrete from the blood a portion of its impurities. These impurities are in a liquid form, and the liquid is known as urine. The kidneys are all the while at work, and as fast as the urine is made, it flows, drop by drop, through little tubes to the

bladder. The bladder is situated in front of the body and just over the private parts. When the bladder is full, we experience an uneasy feeling, which we call a desire to urinate. It is then our duty to go at once to the urinal and relieve ourselves. The urine is discharged through the sexual organs, and is made up of worn-out particles of the body taken from the blood by the kidneys.

Since the urinary organs are alike in both male and female, they cannot be called sexual organs. The sexual organs are those in which the sexes differ; I repeat, then, that since both males and females have kidneys to secrete the urine from the blood, and bladders in which to store it until it is discharged from the body, these organs cannot be called sexual organs.

When the bladder is full, we should discharge its contents as soon as possible. It is injurious to health to do otherwise. We should excuse ourselves, if necessary, from the parlour, and a teacher excuses us from the school-room, to attend to this need. I think it may be our duty some-

times even to leave the church to attend to this call of nature. But we should learn to attend to it before going into society. Before I go into the school-room, or into church, or into the parlour, I should empty my bladder. If I do so, I shall be saved the necessity of leaving the company of others to attend to it. Recess at school is given largely for this one purpose ; and while a wise teacher seldom or never refuses to grant the request of a child to leave the room, it is not right for the child to neglect this duty at intermission, and afterward interrupt his school-work to attend to it.

What I have said about emptying the bladder before going into society leads me to speak of another matter. There are two calls of nature which we should attend to before going into society : the first call is to empty the bladder, and of that call I have spoken ; the second call is to empty the rectum, and of that I am now to speak. The first call may come to us a dozen times a day ; the second usually comes but once. And

these calls largely depend upon habit. If we accustom ourselves to going to the closet immediately after breakfast, we shall seldom be called upon to empty the bowels at any other time. And if we accustom ourselves to going to the urinal before going into school, or into church, or into the parlour, we shall seldom have the mortification of leaving these places to relieve the bladder. A little fore-thought may save us much embarrassment.

When I have spoken of one thing else, I shall have finished my chapter. What I want to speak of now is something relating to our conversation in society. And I begin by saying that we sometimes buy books on etiquette, in which we read that in society we must n't talk about this, nor do that. For instance, we read that it is vulgar to speak about something as disagreeing with one's stomach, to talk about digestion, or about being ill and vomiting; we read that it is in bad form to blow one's nose, to hawk or spit, to scratch one's self, and all that. (We do

not read that it is wrong to allude to the private parts or to the urinary organs, for any one knows better than to do that.) Now, it sometimes seems to me as though one rule can be given which shall supersede all rules like those I have referred to ; that rule is, Be modest.

Modesty, you see, is not only my instinct to keep my private parts pure and sacred to myself, modesty is also my desire to keep my whole person and my whole soul pure and sacred to myself. If I am modest, I do not talk about myself, —I do not brag of my money, my clothes, my learning, my charity, my travels, my strength, my family, my singing, my bravery ; if I am modest, I do not speak about myself at all. Modesty begins in my instinct to keep my private parts pure and sacred to myself, but it does not end there ; modesty causes me to keep my whole person and my soul pure and sacred to myself. I do not speak voluntarily even of my health ; but if a friend kindly asks me how I do, I thank him and give him a truthful answer. So, then, the

modesty which begins in childhood in my desire not to undress before my mother, extends through my whole person, grows into my manhood, and shows itself in my conversation and manner when I go into society.

In my last paragraph I spoke of keeping my private parts pure and sacred to myself. What do I mean by that? I shall tell you what I mean in my next chapter.





XI.

PURE AND SACRED TO MYSELF.

YOU remember I said that I am a teacher. This chapter will be about one of my boys. He was a boy who, I fear, was not pure and sacred to himself.

His name I shall call John; for of course I cannot use his real name in talking to you about him. John was seventeen or eighteen, but he did not do the work which a boy of fourteen ought to have done. He was tall, but not strong,—such legs as he had! you would think a breath of wind would blow him over. He would go out with the other boys at recess, but I do not remember that I ever saw him playing ball with them. He gave me no trouble, he had n't life enough. His cheeks were sunken; his skin a pale-yellow; his eyes

did not snap with life ; he never asked any questions about his lessons ; he did not seem to care to talk with the girls of his class, as most boys of eighteen do ; he never shouted on the playground ; he never ran for a ball ; he gave you an impression of apologizing for living.

I did not know what to make of the boy. His father wanted me to push him in his studies, but how could you push such a fellow as that ? I suppose I found fault with him and tried to get him on, but I don't think I ever succeeded in teaching him much. I suspect I made him hate me, while I was really trying to do him good. I used sometimes to see him on the streets walking listlessly along, — probably he had been sent on some errand. I have also, I feel sure, seen him at church. Once, I took tea at his father's, and spent a pleasant evening with his parents and his brother and sisters.

His brother was much younger, and as bright-eyed and quick to learn as John was dull-eyed and slow. What could cause such a difference in health of body

and mind between two boys having the same father and mother? His sisters, too, were bright and active; they could sing with piano accompaniment: but I never heard John sing. No one thought of asking him to sing. The idea of John's singing would have been funny. But John was not consumptive, he had no cough. He could talk if you would ask him questions, and listen patiently for his low-voiced reply. He could read, but I never knew of his getting interested in Walter Scott or "Robinson Crusoe;" but perhaps he may have been interested in those books. And I do remember that at his father's that evening there was talk about Livingstone, Stanley, and Africa, and I guess his father had been trying to interest all his children in the Dark Continent. John was a strange boy, to say the least.

One day the news came that John was sick. As I now recall my impressions, I think the report was that he had had a fainting turn and had fallen to the floor. I think the story next was that it was some-

thing like a fit. I think that the next impression I received was that he had had such attacks before. Of course, when I perceived that his father did not like to say much about him, I did not ask many questions. Of course I would not press his brother and sisters to tell me much, except to inquire in a general way how John was getting on. Of course, too, I would not ask his physician about him, for a physician must keep a patient's secrets if there are any. But at length I happened to be talking with another man ; and while I do not think I spoke of John in too inquisitive a way, he said to me that while he did not know certainly, John looked to him like a masturbator !

I was dumbfounded. I had never thought of such a cause. If John was a masturbator, it was all explained. His dull eye, his sunken cheeks, his dingy skin, his slow bodily and mental action, his not wishing to talk with the girls, his not wanting to play with the other boys, — all was explained. Now I did not

wonder that his father did not wish to talk much about his son's sickness ; I did not wonder that the boy should have fits ; I did not wonder that a boy of seventeen or eighteen should have so little vitality. For a masturbator is worse than a eonsumptive. It is very bad for a boy of fourteen to smoke, but to be a masturbator is worse than to be a smoker. It is very bad for a boy of fourteen to drink whiskey ; but to be a masturbator is worse than to be a drinker. And what is a masturbator ?

A masturbator is a boy or girl who is not pure and sacred to himself or to herself. It is one who handles his private parts. "Oh, the shame ! " you say. Yes, it is a shame,—a terrible shame ; for it undermines body and soul. These private parts are given to us as a great trust. They are the agents and hiders of a great mystery. They are to be kept clean with soap and water, and are only to be handled as much as is necessary in order to wash them and to use them in urination. Oh, how depraved we are when we

handle them otherwise ! They are given to us to be kept pure until manhood and womanhood. Children yet unborn demand of us to keep ourselves pure. Such a man as John ought never to marry. The children of such a man as he would be cursed before their birth. Oh, let every boy and girl who reads this believe me when I say that we must all be pure and sacred to ourselves.

I have not seen John for five or six years. I do not want to see him. He may not be living ; I do not know. If he isn't living, I am not sorry ; for what use is he in the world ? What comfort will he be to his parents ? What woman will want to marry such a sickly fellow as that ? If he were a consumptive, we should treat him tenderly as long as he lived ; but how can we treat tenderly and lovingly a man who has wrecked his manhood with his own hand ? I don't want to be unjust to John. If it were my duty to take care of him, I should try to do my duty. But my duty now is to warn you with all my power against masturbation.

Please say, as you finish this chapter, that I have done my duty. And please add to that statement this one : that if you prove by and by to be a castaway, it won't be my fault.

One paragraph more, and only one. This last paragraph is to be a picture which you must help me paint. It is to be a picture — a thought-picture, you know — of a boy at eighteen the exact opposite of John. He need not be handsome, but he must be pure. Every line of his face, every sparkle of his keen eye, every motion of his lithe body, shows health. He is a boy who is modest with himself. He is afraid of only one thing, — he is afraid to do a mean act. Think of him at the blackboard solving that algebraic problem : notice how he forgets himself. Watch him on the playground : see how quick his decisions are made ; observe how he forgets himself there ! Now, he is delivering his declamation : see him lose himself in his subject ! School is done, and he is talking with some of the girls : how little self-consciousness

he has ! It is Saturday, and he is at work for his father : already his judgment and strength are worth almost as much as a man's. It is Sunday, and he is at church : observe with what expectation and self-absorption he follows the sermon ! It is Monday, and he is coming down the street : observe him pause to help that little child with his big bundle of clothes for the weekly wash ! See how tenderly he waits on his mother, how respectfully he listens while his father is speaking, how carefully he lifts his hat to that elderly lady ! Watch him at an evening-party, on a rail-car, at a funeral : see how modest, yet how manly he is ! Hark ! to hear how those who are elder praise him. Observe how those who are younger trust him. Look at him in his bath-room as he stands naked with himself : can you imagine him to do anything impure ? He is reading in his chamber : do you think he is reading anything impure ? He is lying in his bed : do you think his hands are immodest with himself ? Impossible ! If he were not pure when he is in his own room, how

could he be so self-forgetful when he is out of it? Paint me a good picture of a good boy of eighteen ; then, if you are a boy, turn and say, "That is I ;" if you are a girl, say, "If I ever marry, that is the kind of a man I should like for my husband."





XII.

THE NEW POWER WHICH COMES TO US IN YOUTH.

A BOY until he is about fourteen loves the society of boys alone; a girl until she is about fourteen loves the society of girls alone. But at some time between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one each sex begins to find a delight in the society of the other. Some time, I say, between those ages of fourteen and twenty-one (that is, in our youth) each one of us begins to see a charm in the other sex. Then it is that we boys begin to invite the girls to walk or to ride, and then it is that the girls begin to invite us to their homes in pleasant evening-parties. Then it is that we begin to fall in love. Falling in love is singling out some one of the other sex who charms

me. Why is it that a boy and a girl delight to talk with each other in youth, when in childhood they did not care to see each other at all? Why is it that we naturally fall in love in youth, when in childhood we despised those who were so silly?

The cause is a new power which is coming to both. Something new is coming into our lives. A change is taking place in our bodies and in our minds; and the cause of the mental change is the physical change. What is this physical change, and has it a name?

The name of this change is puberty. Puberty comes to boys and girls alike, and it comes at about the age of fourteen. Often it comes before that age to girls, but less often to boys. To children in very warm climates it is said to come several years earlier than to children in our climate. The change of puberty does not come suddenly; it does not come in a day, a month, nor in a year. Little by little, year by year, the change goes on, until in our climate at some time between

the ages of fourteen and twenty-one it is complete.

One sign that the change is going on can be detected in the voice. The voice of each sex deepens or strengthens. We most notice the deepening in the voice of the boy, because the difference of pitch is greater. The thin, piping voice of childhood is passing away, and the deeper and stronger and firmer voice of youth is taking its place. At this time wise teachers are careful not to overtax the voice of either sex.

Another sign of the change is that the beard begins to grow on the faces of boys, and that hair begins to appear on other parts of the body of both sexes.

But what is the real change? For of course the real change does not consist in some outward change, like the change of voice or the growth of the beard. The real change is that we are getting ready to become fathers and mothers. That is the real change. Of course it will be a long time yet before the boy or the girl will be married, but this is the change

which fits them to marry. I repeat that the real change within us is a change which is to fit us, by and by, for parenthood. The change in the girl is a change which when it has continued long enough fits her to become a mother; and the change in the boy is a change which when it has continued long enough fits him to be a father. Puberty, then, is a change which fits us for parenthood. I beg you to read these words slowly and reverently. I feel a solemnity and responsibility as I write these words: do you feel a solemnity and responsibility as you read them?

It is Plato who says, "Youth is most charming when the beard first appears," —at least, I first read these words in Plato, but he may have copied them from some older writer. Behold, then, the interest with which we who are older look on the boy and girl at puberty. How anxiously we look to see if his modesty grows greater as this change grows deeper. When we see him dimly conscious of his coming change, how we tremble! When we see him growing more modest and

more respectful to the opposite sex, how we rejoice ! When we see him shunning low companions and scorning to use ribald language, how we love him ! When we see him reverencing the other sex, and especially honouring and reverencing his mother, how we worship him ! How we love to watch him, and how we grow young as we watch ! But come, it is time I stated more in detail the nature of the change we call "puberty."

All life, whether human or animal, comes from the egg, and the egg is secreted by the ovaries of the female. These eggs descend from the ovaries to the womb, but will never have life until the germ of life is given to them by the male, and this germ of life is secreted by the testicles of the male. Now, the real change which takes place in the female at puberty is that the ovaries begin to develop the eggs, and the real change which takes place in the male at puberty is that the testicles begin to develop the germs of life. Remember that I said that this change is a slow change.

The girl at puberty talks with her mother about her health when there is need. The boy at puberty talks with his father or his physician if there be need. Perhaps there will be no need. Do not hesitate to go to them, however, if you do not feel well. None else loves you as they, and none else can advise you as they. You wish to grow manly, or womanly, and strong for life's great duties, and you cannot afford to make a mistake at puberty. The greatest of all life's great duties is the training of the young. While you do not yet think of marriage, you wish to be healthful and strong, if by and by it shall seem right to marry. And what is marriage? We answer that question in our next chapter.

You see, then, what puberty is. You see what a vast change it is. You see what a tremendous responsibility it brings to boy and to girl. You see what a power it brings. You see what a mystery there is in it. You see why those who are older look so anxiously at the young when they are in their "'teens." You see why we

love a modest boy or girl. You see that modesty is the true and only safeguard to the new power and mystery which is dawning on them. You see why parents are anxious for their children. You see why boys and girls naturally and modestly seek each other's society between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one. You see that it is natural and proper that they should seek each other's society between those ages so long as they follow God's teaching of modesty; and you see what untold horrors follow those who do not follow God's law of modesty.





XIII.

MARRIAGE IS RECIPROCITY.

WHEN we are young, we think of God as a person like ourselves ; when we are older, we think of him, or try to, as a Spirit in whom we live and move and have our being. The child thinks of him as acting by caprice, as the winds do or as the child does, and hence as some one to be dreaded ; we who are older think of him as acting by law as the sun does, and no more to be dreaded, if we obey the law, than sunshine.

We say that God made us, and we express a truth : God did make us, and we are his children. But if we were also to say that our parents made us, we should also express a truth : our parents did make us, and we are their children. They

made us, fulfilling, as they did so, a certain law of God. The first truth we tell a little child in his infancy when he first begins to ask questions ; the second truth we tell a boy or girl in his or her childhood, when we think he is old enough not to ask too many questions. God made us : this truth we teach first. He made us in obedience to law, using our father and mother as agents : this fact we teach afterwards, and it is just as necessary that we teach one fact as the other.

The wise father endeavours to find the right time and place to teach his son the second truth ; the wise mother tries to find the right time and place to teach it to her daughter. Yet many, probably most, parents fail to be the first to tell their children. You hear it first from some playmate, and perhaps from some evil-minded companion or playmate. Speaking now for your father,—for you know I write this book for him,—I beg you to forgive him. He has not meant to neglect his duty. He loves you as no one else loves you : you are bone of his

bone, and blood of his blood : he is busy ; he is toiling for you, planning for you ; he would not knowingly omit anything which is for your good ; in his daily care he has not found time to tell you. Forgive him, and draw near to him as if he had been the first to tell you. Acting in his stead, I go on to tell you more about this truth.

God made us, and he made us male and female. He made animals, and he made them male and female. He made plants, and those too he made male and female. He made us male and female that we might perpetuate our kind. He made animals male and female that they might perpetuate their kinds. He made plants, male and female that they might perpetuate their kinds. In order to perpetuate the kind,—that is, to have children,—there must be a union of male and female. This union we call marriage.

But man, though an animal, is something more than animal. Man's breast responds to emotions which must also be in the bosom of God ; man is therefore divine. One proof that man is divine is

that he has modesty ; one proof that man is animal is that he has the sexual passion. Modesty demands that I keep my body pure and sacred to myself ; but parenthood demands that my body shall join the body of my wife. How can either of us do this and not surrender our modesty ? Professor Amiel hints at the answer. "Modesty," he says, "is not surrendered ; it is exchanged." The husband exchanges modesty with his wife. Henceforth he has her honour in his holy keeping, and she has his. This exchange of modesty makes the union holy ; and the name of this holy union is marriage.

When one gives up as much as another for a mutual advantage, the exchange is called a reciprocity. Marriage is reciprocity, because the husband and wife exchange modesty — that sweet gift of God — for the sake of children. The sacrifice is tremendous, but the gain is infinite. Only between those who love each other is such a sacrifice possible ; therefore marriage is preceded by courtship. And what is courtship ? Courtship is where the man and the woman are

each engaged in finding out whether the other is fit to exchange one's modesty with.

When a good woman consents to be a good man's wife, a fine intoxication seizes him, a sense of gratitude masters him. "How dare a woman so pure as she trust herself to the honour of one so unworthy as I?" he asks. Forthwith, he calls on himself to be a nobler man. "Be worthy," he cries to himself, "be worthy to be the husband of such a woman as that." He calls on God to make him worthy of so great a gift as a pure woman's love. He becomes a better man even before his marriage. He promises himself, "Never will I hurt her feelings; never will I outrage the modesty she intrusts me with; never will I let her feel that I am not an honourable man." He begins his sacrifice even before his marriage, toiling to provide her a home.

When a good man asks a good woman to be his wife, she feels covered with honour. The stars shine on a new world. "How dare a man so good as he ask one so unworthy as I to become the

mother of his children?" Forthwith she calls on herself to be a better woman, and to be worthy of his love. And she does become a better woman, even before her marriage. On her knees in her chamber she calls on her God to make her worthy to be this man's wife. She promises herself never to violate the confidence he may repose in her; never to hurt his feelings if she can help doing so; never to give to any other person the trust and the secrets which he reposes in her. She begins to sacrifice even before her marriage, providing clothing and other things necessary to home-keeping.

Is not this reciprocity? Does not each purpose and promise in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, to sacrifice for each other? Does not each receive into his or her keeping the modesty of the other, and yet, retaining his or her own modesty, grow more modest? Marriage is reciprocity. So complete is the reciprocity that we often speak of the two as though they were one. We drop a tear at the wedding, and we crowd around them to wish them joy. In merry sport

we shower them with rice, to say that we wish them a union fruitful with children. A moment ago they were twain; now they are one,—one in name, one in home, one in sorrow and joy, one in the common exchange of modesty, and one in the devotion and reverence of their children.





XIV.

HOME IS THE PLACE WHERE WE SHARE.

IN my last letter I said that marriage is reciprocity, and I tried to prove it. In this letter I am intending to say nearly the same thing; but I am not going to try to prove what I say. I am going to ask you to prove it. That is, I am going to ask you to ask yourself if what I say is true, and if it is true, I am going to ask you to live it in your home. In other words, I hope that you will feel what I say in this chapter, and not merely think it. For what is the use of your reading a book like this, which tells you so many new things about life and home, if the reading does not lead you to live a better life in your home?

Let me tell you exactly what I want you to see and feel. I want you to see

that the home is the place where we share, and I want you to feel willing to share in your home. Willing to share not only its pleasures, but its trials, its toil, its troubles, as well. Home is not the place where we eat, sleep, and dress to go abroad ; home is the place where we share. We share not only food, shelter, and clothing, but we share a common name and blood, and common joys and sorrows. We cannot escape it if we would, and we would not if we could. The children cannot escape their inheritance, and the parents cannot escape their marriage vows. I want you to see how home has its obligations, and I want you to feel a willingness to discharge cheerfully your part of those obligations. Let us begin our lesson by a study of the young married couple who have just set up their home.

Let us suppose, if you please, that as soon as married, they go at once to house-keeping, as all young couples should. Let us suppose they were married in June,—the month of brides and roses,—and that it is now September. The work of the

day is done ; husbands and fathers by the tens of thousands are wending their way homeward ; and she stands on her porch, nearly hidden by the vines which clamber over her doorway (they live in the country), and watches for him. A pretty picture,—scarcely more than girl ; lithe and graceful as the vine which brushes her face ; a prisoner, but she does not know it ; daintily dressed,—she knows what gown her husband likes best to see her in ; within, the house is in complete order ; the table is set ; there are flowers on it ; there is a flower, too, on her husband's dressing-case ; and thus she waits for one footprint among the thousands this warm September evening.

Hey de day ! There he is at last ! How the blood rushes to her heart when the step so long wished for arrives ! Locked in each other's arms, they enter their home, and the door is shut. They are shut in, and you and I are shut out. They are prisoners ; but they do not know it, or if they know it, would not have it otherwise,—bound to each other by a

tie they may not and cannot break, glad of their bondage, rejoicing in it, fellow-prisoners, having promised each other to share each other's joys and sorrows ; there they go into their home, and the door is shut.

Once within her door, and you and I shut out, who can tell what the young wife will not do? She is so happy she does not know what she does. Maybe she pretends she has not been watching for her husband's return at all ; but you and I, who have seen her on the porch, know better. Maybe she weeps because she has him safe at home at last ; maybe she chides him for not coming sooner ; maybe she sings or whistles because she can think of nothing else appropriate to the occasion ; maybe she keeps silent, hoping the more to hear him talk ; and maybe she laughs for no reason at all. There is no telling what a young and happy wife will not do at the glad evening hour when her young and happy fellow-prisoner comes home from his daily task.

As he bends over her, parting her hair

from her face, and kissing her rosy lips, he asks how she has passed the long time of his absence. A shade comes over her face as she bids him dress for supper, after which she may have something to tell him. He goes to his room; on his dressing-case he finds a flower in a tiny vase, and he knows whose loving hands placed it there. She knows what flower he loves best: she does not forget, and she does not intend to forget.

When supper is done they rise and pass involuntarily to their own apartment. She has told him that after supper she may have something to tell him, and the room in which they tell to each other their most sacred thoughts is their sleeping-room. The door closed, he asks her tenderly if the present is not a good time in which to tell him her little secret. She flings herself into his arms, and as he clasps her to his bosom she whispers her little story. Can you guess it?

It is a story consisting of one short sentence; that sentence is one which every young husband waits tremblingly to hear,

and every young wife faints tremblingly to tell. It is a very short sentence, but it carries a world of meaning. It means that the husband who hears it is the father of an unborn child. It means that the wife who speaks it carries another life within her. It means that the husband is called upon, as he never has been called on before, as he never dreamed of being called on, to help bear his wife's burden, to share her anxiety, to cheer her, to comfort her, to help her to bear her coming trial. He must do this under his marriage vows ; it would be a shame to him if he did not do it. He is glad to do it ; he is proud to do it. Who should comfort his wife if not he ; who should share her anticipation and her anxiety but her fellow-prisoner ?

What makes her discovery awful to both ? It is the pain she must suffer in child-bearing, and the anxiety he must suffer for her. Though she brings the child into the world, and would seem at first glance to have it all to bear, yet her good husband so cheers her, so comforts

her, so supports her as really to share the burden.

But is the pain all which makes the wife's discovery of pregnancy awful? No, it is not all. The mystery of it, too, makes it awful. How the union of male and female can produce offspring is the mystery of mysteries. See her fling herself into his arms; see her bury her face in his bosom; hear her low voice as she speaks those few words to her husband; observe her modesty: modesty is always, says Amiel, the sign of a mystery; and this is a mystery which has God in it; and where God is, there is always awe. Not terror, but awe. Yes, awe and love too. For if he loved his wife before, he loves her a thousand times better now. If he purposed to toil for her before, he is a thousand times more willing to toil for her now. If he looked on her in pride before, he looks on her with tenderness and pity now. She is now more than wife to him,—she is the mother of his unborn child. Out of his body has come the germ which has entered hers, and which

will, with the Heavenly Father's blessing, in time become his living son or daughter. His bliss seems too great for one so unworthy as he, and this dear wife of his is the channel of all this blessing. He kisses her again and again, and together they kneel in prayer. He is sharing her joy and her sorrow. It is his duty to share under his marriage vows. He is a prisoner by his marriage, and his wife is his fellow-prisoner. Into this loving prison, my son, my daughter, you were born a few years ago, and you may, if you will, consider all this conversation as having taken place between your father and your mother concerning you, while yet you were unborn.

Find some way to pay them back. Oh, do find some way to thank them. To-night, when you kiss them "Good night," give them two kisses instead of one. Or better still, give your mother a kiss in the middle of the day when she is n't expecting it, and so lighten her burden; or do some favour for your father which he is not expecting, and so lighten his burden.

Or better a thousand times than any kiss or any work, conquer the evil habit in your life which gives them so much anxiety. What is your evil habit? Is it fault-finding? Fretfulness? Repining because you cannot have better clothes, or some other treasure or pleasure? Is it putting off till to-morrow work which should be done now? Is it moodiness? Cheerfulness belongs in the home. Is it the use of tobacco? Is it the keeping of bad company? Whatever the evil be, overcome it, I beg of you. Lift the burden from the shoulders of your parents: it is your duty to share in your home.

Home, then, is where we share. Husbands and wives are sharers. They share a common purse, a common name, and a common anxiety for and pride in their children. And the children, too, are sharers. Having been born into the home, they are prisoners there as well as their parents. They share their parents' name, their parents' features, dispositions, faults, diseases, health, wealth, fame, and disgrace.

The home is a place of obligation ; it is the place where we must share. I know that the poet sings about it as the dearest spot on earth, and all that ; but home cannot be dear to any man unless he bears his share of the home burden. We may disguise it as we will, but home is a prison, — a joyful prison to loving prisoners, but still a prison. And it is a prison because all its inmates — children as well as parents — are under obligation to share.

You see, I hope, what I want you to see. You feel, I hope, what I want you to feel. If you ask me to repeat in cold words what it is that I want you to see and feel, I shall answer : I want you to see how your parents were sharers in a common anxiety about you before you were born, and have shared a common anxiety about you ever since you were born ; and I want you to feel that it is your duty now to pay them back by taking a share in that anxiety yourself. Show by your conduct (not by words only) that you mean to be an obedient child, that

you mean to do right, that you mean to do cheerfully your little share of each day's duties, that you do not pine for money, for dress or pleasure which they cannot afford to give you, that you are grateful to them and your Heavenly Father for your being, and that you do not mean to wreck that being by refusing to be a loving prisoner in a loving prison-home.





XV.

MARRIAGE IS THE BOND OF THE
HOME; THE HOME IS THE FOUN-
DATION OF THE STATE.

NOW, I feel sure that you were surprised at one thing I said in my last letter: you were surprised that I compared marriage to a prison, and husband and wife to prisoners. I said that they two were shut in, and all others were shut out. Perhaps you were indignant as well as surprised that I should have made such a comparison. If you were, you will feel a good deal of interest in this fifteenth letter, for in this letter I hope to make it all plain. This letter, then, is to be a talk on the strength of the marriage-tie, and why we make it so strong.

By "we" I mean the State. It is the State which makes marriage a contract. The good of the State (or nation) requires that they who marry should be prisoners to each other. This is the argument: The only way to make a nation content is to make its people happy in their homes. The only way to make people happy in their homes is to so protect all that every home shall have enough to eat, wear, think about, and love. The only way to make people in the same home love each other is to make them united by ties of blood. The only way to have children in the same home united by ties of blood is to bind indissolubly together the heads of the home,—husband and wife. Marriage, therefore, is a contract which lasts for life; they who contract marriage are prisoners to each other till death shall part them.

If the man were to have a new wife every year, or the wife a new husband; if a new child were to be added each year to the home, which was only half-related by blood to the others, or wholly unrelated,

—if, in other words, the home was to consist of children of different bloods,—quarrels would arise, every home would become unhappy, the community would become chaotic, the State would perish, and the people return to savagery. The home, then, is the basis of the State, and the basis of the home is marriage.

Perhaps I ought to explain more fully what I mean by the “State.” I do not use the word in its geographical sense; I do not mean so much land, as I should mean if I were to say that “Connecticut is bounded on the south by Long Island Sound.” I mean the association of people who live on this land and who are joined into a form of government or society. In truth, I am using the word in a broader sense still; for I do not mean the society on one little piece of ground like Connecticut or Massachusetts, I mean the whole nation, and indeed the whole civilized world. When I say, therefore, that the State for its own safety makes marriage an unbreakable tie, I mean that the whole civilized world makes it so.

It makes no difference that husband and wife are willing prisoners, the State says that, willing or unwilling, they are prisoners. It makes no difference that they love each other, that they toil and sacrifice for each other, that they have never seen or felt themselves to be prisoners ; the State says that, seen or unseen, felt or unfelt, the wall and the locked door are there. I know, of course, that sometimes and for certain reasons the State consents that a marriage shall be dissolved ; but these cases are exceptions. Observe the reluctance with which the State gives her consent ; observe the sorrow with which society hears of the dissolution of the marriage : all this proves that the State expects a marriage to last till death.

Husband and wife may quarrel with each other ; but that is foolish : they will have to "make up" again. The wall stands firm ; they are prisoners in the same cell ; they must live in peace : the State makes them prisoners. Husband or wife may tell his or her trials to some friend ; but that is foolish,—friends outside

do not wish to hear of what takes place inside ; friends outside expect him, or her, to endure his, or her, petty trials and live happily with the other ; friends outside have no right to hear about these things ; the two who are inside must confide in one another : the State makes them prisoners. If the State were to do otherwise, if the State were to allow the marriage-tie to be broken for slight reasons, it would do so at its own peril ; it is for the good of all that each marriage should be a prison.

It is this which makes marriage awful : the bride must leave her mother's arms ; the bridegroom leave his father's house ; neither may return : for better or for worse, the door is shut. Neither tells without the secrets which the shut door conceals ; for either to do so would be to draw upon him or her the scorn of all who listened. It is well enough for the bride to tell her joys to her mother, and it is well enough for the husband to praise his wife to his father and to his friends ; but for either to tell the secrets of the

marriage would be unbearable. They two must keep their own secrets. For better or for worse, the door is shut. The State, for its own safety, shuts the door and locks it ; but who throws away the key?

The Church throws away the key. I mean that not only does the State declare that marriage shall endure for life, — the Church declares it too, and the Church declares it more strongly than the State. The State is a strong and brutal force ; Religion is a strong and gentle force : both forces say that marriage must be between one man and one woman, and must be for life. To show their respect to the strong and brutal force, the man and woman about to marry secure the marriage license and conform in every respect to the requirements of law ; to show their respect to the strong and gentle force, they are married by the priest, and they conform in every respect to the requirements of the Church. Both Church and State agree then in making marriage a finality : between them it gets said that to marry is to shut a door, to shut a door

and to shut it tight, to shut it tight and to lock it secure, to lock it secure and to throw away the key. But the Church has different reasons from the reasons of the State.

Religion argues in this way: 1. Modesty is the gift of God; every gift of God is good, and the receiver must cherish it: it is therefore every man's duty to put a priceless value on his modesty. 2. Passion is also the gift of God; it too is good, and is intended to preserve life on the earth: it is every man's duty to guard his passion carefully, to hold it well in check. 3. But modesty and passion are seemingly opposed; if I keep one, I must give up the other: can any way be found to reconcile them and to keep both? Yes, by marriage. In marriage modesty is exchanged, and so is not lost; in marriage passion is hidden between two, and so fulfils its purpose, and children are born, and life on the earth is not lost. God is therefore glorified in marriage, and religion has always cherished the institution of marriage,—



XVI.

THE PREACHER TEACHES ONE MORE LESSON, AND IS SILENT.

MY book resembles a sermon. Like the preacher, I have taken a text; like the preacher, I have expounded my text; and like the preacher, I have drawn lessons from my text and made applications of the same. In this chapter I teach one more lesson, after giving a brief review of my sermon.

My text came to me; I did not seek it, I was in no need of it. Before I saw it I got on very well without it; before I saw it I had no intention of preaching this sermon to you. After I saw it I could think of nothing else but how I should write the sermon; and when I began to think how I should write it if I were to

write it, there came other questions about writing it, and out of all my questions came the book, which has now reached its last chapter.

You remember my text well enough; we have talked about it more or less in every chapter. And you remember well enough my explanations of the text,— how I made you understand what modesty is; what the profanation of modesty is; how modesty is the teaching of God; how modesty violated brings despair and shame; how marriage brings love and beauty; how modesty is exchanged in marriage; how marriage is reciprocity; how marriage is a prison; how home is the place where we share; and how home is the foundation of the State.

And you remember, too, my application of my teachings. His application the preacher makes at the end of his discourse; but I have made mine as we came along, and you received it all kindly. When I urged you to shun the horrible fate of John, you put your hand into mine, as much as to say, "I will never

be immodest with myself ; " when I have urged you never to look at a girl but with respect, I have seen your manly determination swelling your bosom ; when I have urged you to share in your home, I have seen you looking at your father and mother to see how you could bear some of their burdens. I have seen you stand when your mother comes into the room and press her gently into the easiest chair ; I have heard you call, " Here are your slippers, Father," as your father has come in wearied with his day's toil ; and I have seen so much kind response in you to my kind warnings and exhortations that I have come to love you. Yet we must part.

You see I could not keep my heart out of my letters, after all. In my first letter I said that I was merely the agent of the one who gave you the book, and that you might consider every letter as a personal letter written you by him, and not by me. But I could not quite keep my heart out of my work, and now as I get to my last letter I find it rising to my lips. I bid

you in this letter an affectionate farewell, and I ask you, if you respond in kind, to show it by drawing nearer to your parents. I know a boy of twenty who worships his mother, and he has never read my book either! How much more ought you to worship her, who have read it! I pray that my book may not be a wedge between a boy and his father, between a daughter and her mother, between a son and his mother, between a daughter and her father, to drive them apart; may it be a bond, and a strong bond, to draw them closer together.

Now, in writing the conclusion of my sermon in this my last chapter, I find that I have one caution to give, and one lesson to teach. My caution is that my sermon is, after all, but a fragment. I mean that I am not attempting to give a complete rule of conduct. I have not tried to tell you everything about right living; I have only tried to teach you to live right in one respect. I mean that you must have other virtues besides modesty. Modesty will not earn your living; modesty will

not tell you when to plant corn ; modesty will not win a battle ; modesty will not resist temptation : one must have industry, judgment, courage, strength of will, as well as modesty. This, then, is not a sermon which takes in the rounded whole of life.

But because I have not taught the rounded whole, it does not follow that what I have said is not true, or is not good, or is not to be studied and obeyed. The wisest of us lives only in parts ; no man understands the whole : God only understands the whole. God only knows what life is for, and what our highest good is, and what our supreme motive should be. So I return to my sermon and beg of you to understand as much of it as you can understand, and to live up to all you do understand, leaving to God the glory of showing you how to make your imperfect parts into a complete whole. Oh, let us be thankful that there is a God whose fulness makes our partialities into wholenesses !

I have one more lesson to put into my

sermon, and it is time I were about it. When I shall have finished this lesson the sermon will be done and the book finished. This lesson is not really found in my text, but it follows from it so easily and so naturally that I put it into my book without any hesitation. I must condense the thought, but I hope my brief way of saying it will only arouse more thought in you. The lesson is an answer to the question, What is the chief moral duty of the home?

The chief physical duty of the home is to bear and nourish children, to shelter, clothe, and feed them. The chief educational duty of the home is to teach the child to read, write, count, and so forth. The chief moral duty of the home is to make the child love to obey.

I have heard it said that it is the parent's duty to break the child's will. I hope I shall never hear it said again: instead, I hope to hear it said that it is the parent's duty to strengthen the child's will and to strengthen it to obey.

Yes, the chief duty of the parent is so to train his child as to make him love to obey and expect to obey. I don't mean to obey your parents only; I mean to obey them fully, promptly, and cheerfully. And I mean something more still: I mean that kind of obedience where the parent obeys as well as the child, and where the child can see him obey. Example is better than precept. It is more obligatory on parents to obey than it is on children, because they are older. Now, then, the kind of obedience which the home should teach is that kind where the parent obeys certain laws, and does it daily, and the child can see him do it.

The spirit of the home is the spirit of sharing; the expectation of the home is the expectation to obey. Parents and children alike must obey; for we are all children. Parents and offspring alike are the children of the one Heavenly Father. In our Heavenly Father's house we obey and love to obey. This, then, is my last exhortation,—Obey, obey, obey. Obey the

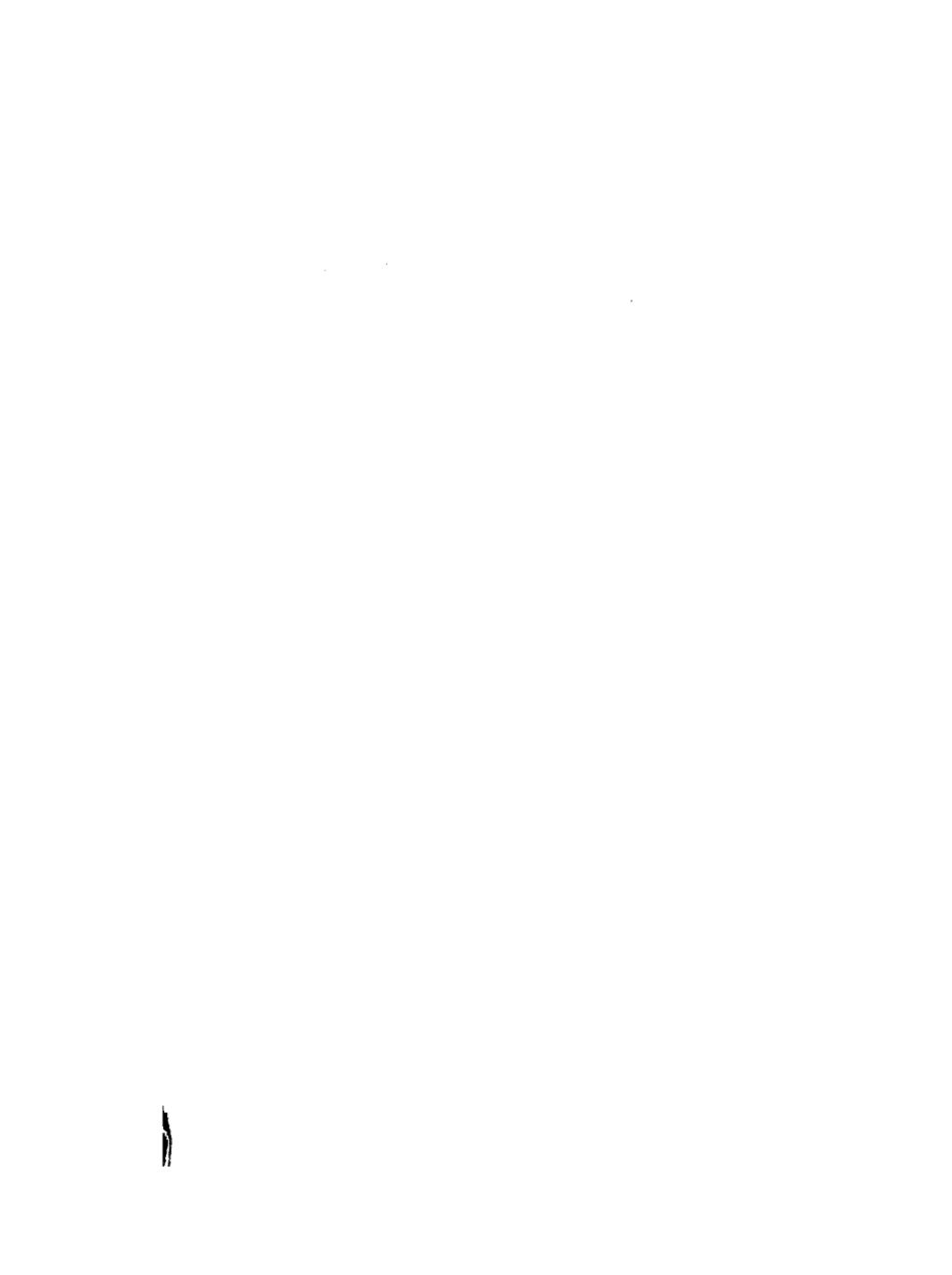
modesty which God gives you ; obey the parents to whom God gave you ; obey the Voice that speaks softly within you.

The sermon is done, and the voice of the preacher is silent.

THE END.

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